

Message Text

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11

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-10

SAM-01 /065 W

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R 200906Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8133

INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 2217

E.O 11652I GDS

TAGS: PFOR, JA, KS

SUBJECT: ROK-JAPAN RELATIONS: RELEASE OF JAPANESE NATIONALS

SUMMARY: WHILE RELEASE FEB 15 OF TWO JAPANESE NATIONALS IMPRISONED IN ROK HAS IMPROVED ATMOSPHERE, IT HAS OT AFFECTED SIGNIFICANTLY SUBSTANCE O ROK-JAPAN RELATIONS. DESPITE WILLINGNESS OF MIKI GOVERNMENT TO SEEK IMPROVEMENT IN RELATINS, OLD ISSUES LIKE TREZTMENT OF KIM DAE-JUNG AND KIM DONG WOON REMAIN ALIVE.

END SUMMARY.

1. FIRST NORTHEAST ASI DIV DIR SEO TOLD EMBOFF THAT RELEASE FEB 15 OF TWOOO JAPANESE NATIONALS IMPRISONED IN ROK WILL IMPROVE ATMOSPHERE ROK-JAPAN RELATIONS AND REMOVE IRRITANT BETWEEN TWO GOVERNMENTS. DESPITE PRISONERS DEROGATORY REMARKS ABOUT ROK AT

POST-RELEASE PRESS CONFERENCES, ROK ACTION LIKELY TO IMPROVE JAPANESE PUBLIC'S IMAGE OF SEOUL GOVERNMENT.

2. PRESS AND MEDIA TREATMENT OF RELEASE HAS BEEN BALANCED, SEO FELT WITH JOYOUS REACTIONS OF RELATIVES AND PRESS CONFERENCES REPORTED SIDE BY SIDE WITH KIM CHI HA'S REMARKS THAT JAPANESE NATIONALS HAD BEEN IMPRUDENT AND CAUSED CPROBLEMS FOR MANY KOREANS.

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3. SUBSTANTIVELY, SEO CONTINUED, ISSUE OF JAPANESE NATIONALS HAD NOT BEEN CONSIDERED MAJOR OUTSTANDING PROBLEM OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS. MAIN ISSUES IN LATTER CATEGORY REMAIN UNRESOLVED, AND ARE STILL ALIVE DESPITE PRO-KOREAN PROPENSITIES OF MIKI GOVERNMENT. ON KIM DAE-JUNG CASE, FOR EXAMPLE, FOMIN MIYAZAWA'S FIRST REACTION TO BRIEFING PAPER ON KIM CASE PREPARED BY SEO IN JANUARY WAS "I UNDERSTAND THIS IS A DIFFICULT AND COMPLICATED QUESTION, BUT IS IT REALLY SO DIFFICULT". APPARENTLY, MIYAZAWA BECAME CONVINCED BECAUSE IN EARLY FEBRUARY HE INSTRUCTED DEPARTING AMBASSADOR USHIROKU TO TELL PRIME MINISTER KIM CHONG PIL THAT KIM CASE STILL A PROBLEM BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AND THAT FINAL SETTLEMENT NOT ENTIRELY SATISFACTORY TO JAPANESE PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY WHERE PUNISHMENT OF KIM DONG-WOON CONCERNED. THOUGH UNCOMFORTABLE, USHIROKU MADE PITCH, WITH NO RESPONSE FROM KIM. NEW AMBASSADOR NISHIYAMA, SEO CONTINUED, WILL BE INSTRUCTED TO MAKE SAME POINT WHEN HE PAYS HIS INITIAL CALLS UPON ARRIVAL IN SEOUL IN EARLY MARCH.

4. AS YET THERE HAS BEEN NO PLANNING FOR MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE. NO ONE SURE PRECISELY WHEN DIET SESSION WILL END OR GENERAL ELECTIONS BE HELD. GOVERNMENT, SO CONCLUDED, IS DETERMINED TO HOLD CONFERENCE AS SOON AS PHYSICALLY POSSIBLE, HOWEVER.

5. COMMENT: SEO'S REMARKS GIVE IMPRESSION THAT ROK RELEASE OF JAPANESE WILL IMPROVE ATMOSPHERICS BUT NOT SUBSTANCE OF ROK-JAPAN RELATIONS.

6. DETAILS OF USHIROKU'S FINAL CALL (PARA 3) ARE SENSITIVE AND SHOULD BE HELD CLOSE.
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Message Attributes

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Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, PRISONERS RELEASE
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Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Executive Order: GS
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